DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; Notice of Final Priority

AGENCY: Department of Education.

SUMMARY: The Secretary announces a final priority for programs administered by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The Secretary may use this priority in Fiscal Year 1997 and subsequent years. The Secretary takes this action to focus Federal assistance on identified needs to improve results for children with disabilities. This final priority is intended to ensure wide and effective use of program funds.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This priority takes effect on July 30, 1997.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information on this final priority contact the Grants and Contracts Services Team, 600 Independence Avenue, S.W., room 3317, Switzer Building, Washington, D.C. 20202–2641. The preferred method for requesting information is to FAX your request to: (202) 205–8717. Telephone: (202) 260–9182.

Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the TDD number: (202) 205–9860. Individuals with disabilities may obtain a copy of this notice in an alternate format (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) by contacting the Department as listed above.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This notice contains one final priority authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This final priority supports the National Education Goals by helping to improve results for children with disabilities.

On March 24, 1997, the Secretary published a notice of proposed priorities in the **Federal Register** (62 FR 13972).

The publication of this final priority does not preclude the Secretary from proposing additional priorities, nor does it limit the Secretary to funding only this priority, subject to meeting applicable rulemaking requirements. Funding of particular projects depends on the availability of funds, and the quality of the applications received.

Note: This notice of final priority does *not* solicit applications. A notice inviting applications under this competition is published in a separate notice in this issue of the **Federal Register**.

Analysis of Comments and Changes

In response to the Secretary's invitation in the notice of proposed priorities, twelve parties submitted comments. An analysis of the comments and of the changes in the proposed priority follows. Technical and other minor changes—as well as suggested changes the Secretary is not legally authorized to make under the applicable statutory authority—are not addressed.

Priority—Directed Research Projects

Focus 1—Beacons of Excellence.

Comment: One commenter recommended that Focus 1 be operated as a five-year institute with sufficient funding to investigate both general education and special education change.

Discussion: The Secretary notes that Focus 1 requires projects to study schools achieving exemplary results for students with disabilities in the context of efforts to achieve exemplary results for all students. The Secretary anticipates that applicants would need to investigate both the general education and special education practices associated with achieving exemplary results for students with disabilities. Decisions concerning the number of projects to fund, project funding levels, and project durations are based on a determination of the time and funding needed to carry out the intent of a particular focus. The Secretary believes it is possible that some, but not necessarily all, applicants may need more than three years to complete project activities. However, the Secretary prefers, given the diversity of approaches and of schools achieving exemplary results, to fund multiple projects, rather than extend the project's duration in this focus.

Changes: The phrase ''During the third year'' in the last sentence of Focus 1 has been replaced with ''During the final year'' to allow project periods to exceed three years if the extended time period is justified.

Comment: One commenter recommended that Focus 1 support one project to study reform at middle and high school levels, asserting that the need for information is greater at these levels than at the elementary level, where greater progress in reform has been made.

Discussion: The Secretary agrees that middle and high school levels should be studied, and notes that Focus 1 allows projects to focus on either secondary or elementary levels, or both. Further, the Secretary believes it would be beneficial to support at least one project at both the elementary and secondary school level. However, the Secretary does not believe that it is necessary to have one project that includes both levels.

Changes: The priority has been revised to reflect the Secretary's plan to support at least one project at the elementary level and at least one project at the secondary level.

Comment: One commenter asked if projects were required to study multiple schools, or if a project could propose to study only one school.

Discussion: It may be possible for an applicant to propose a technically sound project involving the study of just one exemplary school.

Changes: The phrase ''one or more'' has been added to the first sentence to indicate that a project may propose to study just one exemplary school.

Comment: One commenter suggested that Focus 1 require applicants to identify in their proposals the exemplary schools they will study so that reviewers can assess school quality as part of the proposal evaluation focus and so that OSEP is assured that exemplary schools agree to participate in the project.

Discussion: The Secretary is confident that researchers will include criteria in their applications that will result in the identification of exemplary schools, but that it is unlikely that many applicants will be able to identify exemplary schools with sufficient rigor prior to receiving funding. The commenter's suggested approach could potentially weaken the competition and reduce the overall quality of the projects funded under this focus.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter suggested that OSEP clarify whether Focus 1 includes ''promising'' practices as well as practices that have been proven effective. The commenter further suggested that promising and proven practices should be reported as separate categories.

Discussion: The distinction between ''promising'' and ''proven'' is a relatively complex issue, as is the exact definition of ''practice,'' and the Secretary believes these issues go beyond the central purpose of Focus 1. The projects must identify and study factors contributing to exemplary learning results, not necessarily promising or proven practices.

Changes: None.

Focus 2—Prevention and Early Intervention Services for Children With Emotional and Behavioral Problems

Comment: One commenter expressed confusion as to the purpose of Focus 2, and recommended that projects be required to identify factors that prevent children from developing emotional and

behavioral problems, identify program factors designed to prevent the problems, and describe the results of the intervention in terms of outcomes for children.

Discussion: Focus 2 is broadly stated, intentionally, to welcome a diversity of research foci that examine specific factors that contribute to effectiveness. The only specific requirement for every research project is that, in some way, each research project must include an evaluation of the collaboration and coordination of prevention and early intervention services. The areas of investigation recommended by the commenter are permissible under Focus 2, as long as the proposed research also includes an evaluation of collaboration and coordination of prevention and early intervention services.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter recommended that Focus 2 specifically identify the child's primary health care provider or medical home provider as one of the service providers to be included in evaluating the effectiveness of collaborative, community-based services.

Discussion: Focus 2 states that primary care and mental health programs, where available, are additional programs appropriate for study. Given the vast array of service providers applicants could propose to study, the Secretary does not believe it is possible to provide an all inclusive list and prefers to retain the broad language of Focus 2.

Changes: None.

Focus 4—The Sustainability of Promising Innovations

Comment: Two commenters wrote in support of the importance of allowing, as an integral component of Focus 4, the development of approaches to build internal site capacity for maintaining effective innovations beyond the term of external implementation support.

Discussion: The Secretary agrees that the development of site-based approaches to build internal capacity to sustain promising and effective innovations is a desirable outcome. However, the Secretary emphasizes that the primary purpose of Focus 4 is to study the sustainability of promising innovations and that, as such, any proposed approach to site based capacity building should be an integral part of the research design.

Change: None.

Comment: One commenter suggested expanding Focus 4 to include the study of sustaining innovations designed to prevent inappropriate referrals to and placement in special education.

Discussion: The Secretary agrees with the commenter on the importance of effective approaches for preventing inappropriate referrals to and placement in special education. The Secretary notes that Focus 4 is primarily interested in issues of sustainability of innovations that hold positive results for children with disabilities within a school restructuring/reform context. This broad focus does not preclude projects from including the study of inappropriate referrals and placement as a component of a research plan.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter suggested that Focus 4 should consider the interrelationships between the innovations being studied and the overall educational system where they are used.

Discussion: The Secretary agrees with the importance of studying the interrelationships among a variety of factors across different levels of the system. The Secretary notes, however, that Focus 4 does not preclude the study of interrelationships among factors, in fact Focus 4 encourages that study. For example, Focus 4 projects may address the extent of consonance or dissonance between critical features of the innovations and existing (and emerging) school and district practices and policies.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter recommended Focus 4 specify that promising innovations may include policy implementation research as well as practice-based research and model demonstrations.

Discussion: The Secretary agrees that policy implementation research is important, but believes that Focus 4 does not preclude those studies. The Secretary notes that, among the factors that may be studied, item (f) includes school policy requirements and item (g) includes school and district practices and policies.

Changes: None.

Comment: Two commenters expressed concerns regarding the documentation of ongoing program effectiveness. One commenter asked if the sustainability of programs or the effectiveness of programs is the area of concentration. Another commenter recommended including sustained changes in student results as part of the research design.

Discussion: The purpose of Focus 4 is to study the sustainability of innovations that have documented positive results for children with disabilities and, in doing so, requires the ongoing documentation of results for children with disabilities as a component of the research plan.

Changes: Focus 4 has been revised to clarify that sustained changes in student results is part of the research design.

Comment: One commenter suggested the phrase ''results for students with disabilities'' as used in Focus 4 be expanded to include factors such as more substantial and ongoing parent involvement in individual education plan (IEP) development that are important aspects of providing an appropriate education for students with disabilities.

Discussion: The Secretary agrees that innovative approaches to improving interactions among professionals and families and facilitating least restrictive environment (LRE) placements are important aspects of providing an appropriate education for children with disabilities. The Secretary believes, however, that the ultimate measure of the effectiveness of these approaches is the extent to which they lead to positive results for children with disabilities. The Secretary believes that the phrase ''positive results for students with disabilities'' is inclusive of a wide range of possible important results for students with disabilities including the attainment of relevant and appropriate academic, social, behavioral, and functional goals and objectives.

Changes: None.

General Comments

Comment: One commenter requested that all research focus areas include the need for research in early intervention and school based therapeutic interventions to meet the educational needs of children with disabilities.

Discussion: The Secretary acknowledges that early intervention and school based therapeutic interventions are often important elements in improving results for children with disabilities. However, these interventions are not pertinent to all of the focus areas. The various focus areas do not preclude an applicant from proposing early intervention and school based therapeutic interventions, where appropriate. The Secretary believes it would be impossible to provide a comprehensive list of potential intervention strategies in any focus area. The Secretary prefers to maintain the broad language of the focus areas, and allow applicants to propose and justify their particular strategy.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter recommended that all research projects should be capped at some reasonable indirect rate, and stated that an indirect

cost rate between 8 to 12 percent is more than adequate.

Discussion: The subject of indirect cost rates for research projects is beyond the scope of comments sought in the notice of proposed priorities. Indirect cost rates are addressed in the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), which are currently under review.

Changes: None.

Priority

Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), the Secretary gives an absolute preference to applications that meet the following priority. The Secretary will fund under this competition only applications that meet this absolute priority:

Absolute Priority—Directed Research Projects

Background

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has, in prior years, announced priorities for the support of research projects under several of the programs authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Separate research priorities (competitions) have been announced under the Early Education Program for Children with Disabilities, Program for Children with Severe Disabilities, Secondary Education and Transitional Services for Youth with Disabilities Program, Program for Children and Youth with Serious Emotional Disturbance, and the Research in Education of Individuals with Disabilities Program. The purpose of this priority is to group all priorities for directed research and apply a single set of requirements among the various competitions. By consolidating multiple priorities and announcements into one priority, OSEP endeavors to avoid unnecessary duplication and provide consistent information for all research competitions. The program authority for each focus is listed following each focus statement.

Priority

This priority provides support for projects that advance and improve the knowledge base and improve the practice of professionals, parents, and others providing early intervention, special education, and related services, including professionals who work with children with disabilities in regular education environments, to provide such children effective instruction and enable them to learn successfully. Under this priority, projects must support innovation, development, exchange, and use of advancements in knowledge and practice designed to contribute to the improvement of early intervention, instruction, and learning of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.

A research project must address one of the following focus areas:

Focus 1—Beacons of excellence. Research projects supported under focus 1 must identify and study one or more schools achieving exemplary results for students with disabilities in the context of efforts to achieve exemplary results for all students. Projects must develop and apply procedures and criteria to identify such schools, and to identify factors contributing to exemplary learning results, and examine how those factors and other factors relate to achieving exemplary learning results for students with disabilities. Projects may focus on either secondary or elementary levels, or both. The Secretary intends to award at least one project at the elementary level and at least one project at the secondary level. During the final year of the project, the Secretary will determine whether or not to fund an optional six-month period for extended dissemination activities arranged with OSEP.

Program Authority: Research in Education of Individuals with Disabilities Program, 20 U.S.C. 1441.

Focus 2—Prevention and early intervention services for children with emotional and behavioral problems. Many young children with emotional and behavioral problems experience years of repeated preschool and school failure, permanent damage to their self-esteem, and escalation of their problems, before they receive appropriate services. Research projects supported under this focus must identify, examine, and document information about the specific factors that contribute to effectiveness in collaborative, community-based, prevention and early intervention services to prevent children with emotional and behavioral problems from developing serious emotional disturbance. The target population for these projects includes children in preschool, kindergarten, and the primary grades (1–4), and their families.

The research may focus, for example, on child find, screening, early identification, assessment, pre-referral strategies, child and family intervention and prevention services, and results. Research must include but is not limited to services and programs funded under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Additional programs with collaborative, community-based services appropriate for study may include, where available, Head Start and Early Head Start programs, other early childhood service programs, primary care and mental health programs, child care center programs, and public and private preschools and elementary school programs. Each research project must include an evaluation of the collaboration and coordination of prevention and early intervention services across multiple service providers and agencies working with these children and their families.

Program Authority: Program for Children and Youth with Serious Emotional Disturbance, 20 U.S.C. 1426.

Focus 3—Students approaching graduation and the supplemental security income program. Many children and youth with disabilities receiving special education services also receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Administered by the Social Security Administration, the SSI program provides cash assistance, Medicaid eligibility, and work incentives such as the Impairment-Related Work Expense incentive and the Plan for Achieving Self-Support. National data indicate that these work incentives are under-utilized and that most working-age SSI recipients are unemployed. To address this problem, the National Academy of Social Insurance (1996) recommended that information about the SSI work incentives should be incorporated in the transition planning process required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The SSI work incentives may therefore enhance the employment results of transitioning youth with disabilities.

The purpose of focus 3 is to develop and test innovative strategies for increasing the utilization of the SSI work incentives. Projects must: (a) Examine the barriers to employment for young adults with disabilities who are receiving SSI benefits; (b) develop innovative strategies and materials for promoting the utilization of work incentives through the transition planning process; and (c) apply qualitative and quantitative research methods to determine the relative efficacy of technical assistance strategies, toward improving work incentive utilization developed under (b).

Program Authority: Secondary Education and Transitional Services for Youth with Disabilities Program, 20 U.S.C. 1425.

Focus 4—The sustainability of promising innovations. A growing body of practice-based research and model demonstration work in schools and local districts, including projects

supported by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), has focussed on meeting the needs of, and improving the results for, students with disabilities in schools and districts involved in reform and restructuring initiatives. Some of this work is yielding promising positive results for students with disabilities. However, little is known about the extent to which the innovations developed and implemented in these efforts are sustained in project sites beyond the term of time-limited external support and assistance.

Focus 4 is designed to study the implementation of practices that have been found to be effective in meeting the needs of students with disabilities in reform/restructuring initiatives in local and district schools. The practices must have been included as part of projects designed to implement such practices. The study must address: (1) The extent to which such practices have been sustained beyond the term of the projects; and (2) factors that influence the determined level of sustainability. Factors to be studied may include, but are not limited to: (a) The nature of the innovations and the extent to which the innovations have undergone adaptation or alteration over time; (b) the type and extent of support strategies employed during initial implementation stages and over time; (c) planned and unplanned changes in school organizational and/or structural contexts; (d) the level of penetration of the innovation; (e) the actual and perceived costs and benefits for participants; (f) constancy of site leadership, school staff, and school policy requirements; (g) the extent of consonance or dissonance between critical features of the innovations and existing (and emerging) school and district practices and policies; and (h) resource access and allocation. Within focus 4, projects must provide comprehensive descriptions of the targeted effective practices to be studied, and convincing documentation of resulting positive results for students with disabilities. Projects must focus research on issues of sustainability and must incorporate in their research design the continuing documentation of results for students with disabilities. Within focus 4, the Secretary particularly encourages an in-depth case study research design where the sites to be studied are the cases.

Program Authority: Research in Education of Individuals with Disabilities Program, 20 U.S.C. 1441.

Focus 5—Educating children with severe disabilities in inclusive settings. Focus 5 supports research projects to (a) identify new or improved strategies to address the educational and related service needs of children and youth with severe disabilities in inclusive general education settings and extracurricular activities, and (b) describe how the school inclusion strategies as identified in (a) are aligned with systemic reform and school improvement strategies for all students.

Additional research is needed to identify, describe, and examine: (1) The efficacy and linkages of existing systemic reform and school inclusion strategies, (2) how school systems provide supports and collaborative teaming to meet the needs of students with severe disabilities, and other diverse learners; (3) how standards and authentic assessment practices are implemented for students with severe disabilities and their impact on inclusive and systemic reform efforts, (4) social support strategies that promote positive interactions among students with severe disabilities and other students, and their same-aged peers to foster cohesive school and classroom communities; and (5) the types of peer-mediated strategies that actively involve all students, including students with severe disabilities, in inclusive educational programs.

To be considered for funding under focus 5, a research project must—

(a) Identify specific interventions or strategies to be investigated;

(b) Design the research activities in a manner that is likely to improve services for all students in inclusive classrooms, including students with severe disabilities;

(c) Conduct the research in schools pursuing systemic education reform and school inclusion; and

(d) Use methodological procedures designed to produce findings useful to program implementers and policy makers regarding the impact and interaction effects of systemic reform and school inclusion strategies in State and local contexts.

All projects funded under focus 5 must identify and describe how these inclusion efforts benefit students with severe disabilities including the reciprocal benefits of inclusive schooling for all students.

Program Authority: Program for Children with Severe Disabilities, 20 U.S.C. 1424.

Requirements for All Directed Research Projects

In addition to addressing focus (1), (2), (3), (4), or (5) above, projects must:

(a) Apply rigorous research methods (qualitative and/or quantitative) to identify approaches contributing to improved results for children with disabilities;

(b) Provide a conceptual framework, based on extant research and theory to serve as a basis for the issues to be studied, the research design, and the target population;

(c) Prepare dissemination materials for both researcher and practitioner audiences and develop linkages with U.S. Department of Education dissemination and technical assistance providers, in particular those supported under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, to communicate research findings and distribute products; and

(d) Budget for two trips annually to Washington, D.C., for: (1) a two-day Research to Practice Division Project Directors' meeting; and (2) another meeting to collaborate with the Research to Practice Division project officer and the other projects funded under this priority, and to share information and discuss findings and methods of dissemination.

Selection Criteria for Evaluating Applications Under the Absolute Priority—Directed Research Projects

The Secretary will use the following criteria to evaluate applications under the absolute priority—Directed Research Projects. The maximum score for all the criteria is 100 points.

(a) *Importance* (10 points). The Secretary reviews each application to determine the importance of the project in leading to the understanding of, remediation of, or compensation for, the problem or issue that relates to the early intervention with or special education of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.

(b) *Technical soundness* (40 points). The Secretary reviews each application to determine the technical soundness of the research, including—

(1) The design;

(2) The proposed sample;

(3) Instrumentation; and

(4) Data analysis procedures.

(c) *Plan of operation* (10 points).

(1) The Secretary reviews each application to determine the quality of the plan of operation for the project.

(2) The Secretary looks for—

(i) High quality in the design of the project;

(ii) An effective plan of management that insures proper and efficient administration of the project;

(iii) A clear description of how the objectives of the project relate to the purpose of the program; and

(iv) The way the applicant plans to use its resources and personnel to achieve each objective.

(3) The quality of the evaluation plan for the project including the extent to

which the methods of evaluation are appropriate for the project and, to the extent possible, are objective and produce data that are quantifiable.

(Cross Reference: 34 CFR 75.590, Evaluation by the grantee.)

(d) *Quality of key personnel* (10 points).

(1) The Secretary reviews each application to determine the qualifications of the key personnel that the applicant plans to use on the project.

(2) The Secretary considers—

(i) The qualifications of the project director (if one is to be used); and,

(ii) The qualifications of each of the other key personnel to be used in the project; and

(iii) The time that each person referred to in paragraphs (d)(2)(i) and (ii) of this section will commit to the project.

(3) To determine personnel qualifications, the Secretary considers experience and training in fields related to the objectives of the project, as well as other evidence that the applicant provides.

(e) *Underrepresented populations* (10 points). The Secretary reviews each application for information that shows the extent to which the applicant, as part of its nondiscriminatory employment practices, employs members of underrepresented populations as project staff. The Secretary looks for—

(1) Employees who are members of underrepresented populations, including members of racial or ethnic minority groups and individuals with disabilities; and

(2) Procedures to provide training and other necessary support to retain and advance qualified personnel from underrepresented populations.

(f) *Adequacy of resources* (5 points).

(1) The Secretary reviews each application to determine if the applicant plans to devote adequate resources to the project.

(2) The Secretary considers the extent to which—

(i) The facilities that the applicant plans to use are adequate; and

(ii) The equipment and supplies that the applicant plans to use are adequate.

(g) *Impact* (5 points). The Secretary reviews each application to determine the probable impact of the proposed research and development products and the extent to which those products can be expected to have a direct influence on infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities or personnel responsible for their education or early intervention services.

(h) *Organizational capability* (5 points). The Secretary considers—

(1) The applicant's experience in special education or early intervention services; and

(2) The ability of the applicant to disseminate the findings of the project to appropriate groups to ensure that they can be used effectively.

(i) *Budget and cost effectiveness.* (5 points)

(1) The Secretary reviews each application to determine if the project has an adequate budget and is cost effective.

(2) The Secretary considers the extent to which—

(i) The budget for the project is adequate to support the project activities; and

(ii) Costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives of the project.

Intergovernmental Review

Except for Focus areas 1 and 4 in this priority, all other focus areas included in this notice are subject to the requirements of Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR Part 79. The objective of the Executive order is to foster an intergovernmental partnership and a strengthened federalism by relying on processes developed by State and local governments for coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance.

In accordance with the order, this document is intended to provide early notification of the Department's specific plans and actions for this program.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Numbers: Research in Education of Individuals with Disabilities Program, 84.023; Program for Children with Severe Disabilities, 84.086; Program for Children and Youth with Serious Emotional Disturbance, 84.238; and Secondary Education and Transitional Services for Youth with Disabilities Program, 84.158)

Dated: June 24, 1997.

Judith E. Heumann,

Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

[FR Doc. 97–17059 Filed 6–27–97; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year 1997

SUMMARY: This notice provides a closing date and other information regarding the transmittal of applications for a fiscal year 1997 competition under programs authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This notice supports the National Education Goals by helping to improve results for children with disabilities.

Note: The Department of Education is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Priorities

Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) the Secretary gives an absolute preference to applications that meet the following priority. The Secretary will fund under this competition only those applications that meet this absolute priority:

Absolute Priority—Directed Research Projects (84.023D). The priority Directed Research Projects in the notice of final priority under programs authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**, applies to this competition.

Applications Available: July 3, 1997.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: August 15, 1997.

Under this Directed Research Projects priority, a research project must address one of five focus areas. A separate application must be submitted for each focus area. Following is the pertinent information for each focus area:

Focus 1—Beacons of Excellence

Eligible applicants: State and local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, and other public agencies and nonprofit private organizations.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR Parts 74, 75, 77, 80, 81, 82, 85, and 86; and (b) The regulations in 34 CFR Part 324.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR Part 86 apply to institutions of higher education only.

Estimated Number of Awards: 4.

Project Period: The majority of projects will be funded for up to 36 months. Only in exceptional circumstances—such as research questions that require repeated measurement, longitudinal design—will projects be funded for more than 36 months or up to a maximum of 54 months.

Focus 2—Prevention and Early Intervention Services for Children With Emotional and Behavioral Problems

Eligible Applicants: Institutions of higher education, State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and other appropriate public and nonprofit private institutions or agencies.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General